



# Hamsplatter

"It is up to us to encourage the proper use of the repeaters and the autopatch system . . ."

N9WS

December 1997

Volume 26, Issue 12



## President's Corner

The month of November had its share of ups and downs for the club. On the up side, the repeaters were working in top form. On the down side, someone decided to use our autopatch capability to call 911 and then hang up on them. This may have seemed a relatively minor prank to be pulled, but in fact it put our autopatch system in jeopardy of being removed. Since the .94 repeater is located at Parkview hospital, when the enhanced 911 system received the call it displayed as the Parkview hospital. Since the call was from a hospital, the emergency teams had to be put into action. Consequently, when the information was provided that the calls were being placed through our autopatch, we had to take immediate action.

This is why several people noticed that the autopatch systems were not working for a few days. After some scrambling on the part of a dedicated few, a means for blocking access to 911 through the autopatch system was developed and once again the autopatch was restored.

Bottom line is if the system is abused in a like manner, we may all lose the privilege of using

autopatch. I request that if anyone knows who was abusing the system that they have a good talk with the individual and get the person's agreement to not abuse the system anymore. If they refuse to conform and continue the abuse of the system we may all lose. Let me make it clear that no action towards anyone should be taken other than discussing the issue with them or reporting them to proper authorities.

This also brought up the subject of keeping the access code (9) from non-club members. Let me make it clear that the repeater system and

of some relatively inexpensive accessories.

It is up to us to encourage the proper use of the repeaters and the autopatch system by setting a good example and helping new amateurs to learn proper procedures. The best defense against abusers of the systems is to set a good example and ignore the abuse whenever possible. Most abusers thrive on getting a response out of others, especially if the response indicates that they got somebody's goat. Enough said on this topic.

The Season is upon us and our banquet is scheduled for 6:30 on Friday the 19<sup>th</sup> at our regular meeting place at the Good Shepherd United Methodist Church on the corner of Vance and Reed. I look forward to celebrating the season with all of you at the banquet. And for those unable to attend, I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

73s from N9WS  
Bill Stockslager  
Acting President

**Editor:**  
Todd Hargis,  
N9XRG 492-2138

**President:**  
Bill Stockslager,  
N9WS 471-5492

**Vice President:**  
(open)

**Secretary:**  
Al Burke, WB9SSE  
637-1989

**Treasurer:**  
Carl Rittenhouse,  
N9NRO 485-4012

**Communications Manager:**  
Larry Burke,  
N9HVP  
637-5454

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**Next Meeting**  
**CHRISTMAS**  
**BANQUET**  
**6:30 PM**  
**Friday 12/19/97**  
**at the Good Shepherd**  
**United Methodist**  
**Church**  
**Corner of Vance Ave**  
**and Reed Rd**

the autopatch are for the proper use of all licensed amateurs in the area, not just the club members. It is a service that we provide to the amateur community. So giving out the access code on the air is not forbidden. Anyone who wants to abuse the system can figure out any access code that would be put on the system with the help



# November Minutes of the FWRC

1. The November meeting of the Ft. Wayne Radio Club was held at the Good Shepherd United Methodist Church on 21 November, 1997. There were about 35 people in attendance and the meeting was hosted by President Bill Stockslager.
2. The November minutes were read and there was one correction made regarding the date of the upcoming Christmas party. The minutes were corrected to indicate that the party will occur on December 19th, not the 16th.
3. Treasurer Carl Rittenhouse reported that as of 21 November, 1997 the General account held a balance of \$4681.72, the Hamfest account held a balance of \$500.00 and the Repeater account held a balance of \$1832.84
4. Carole Burke noted that the club Christmas party would be held on December 19th starting promptly at 6:30 p.m. The meal is planned to consist of chicken, ham, two side dishes, rolls and drinks, all of which will be provided by the club. Carole asked that attendees bring desserts, the more the better. The fee is \$5.00 per adult, \$2.50 for kids 10 and under. Carole, Becky Stockslager and Annie Pliett will be polling the membership by phone and plan to determine the number of attendees by December 5th so that the proper amount of food can be ordered. Carole mentioned that a voluntary gift exchange would occur for those interested in participating.
5. Bill Hall noted that the National Weather Service will soon be relocating in Syracuse, Indiana and will be moving out of the location presently held at Baer Field. An initial meeting of "IMO", the Indiana, Michigan, Ohio Skywarn group will hold a meeting November 29, 1997 to initiate coordination of Amateur communications resources to support the relocated NWS facilities. Bill Stockslager noted that the FWRC would make all FRWC repeater resources available to support Skywarn if and when requested.
6. Cliff Shreve reported that the "Santa ATV" activity at the State Hospital would again occur this year on December 20, 1997 starting at 1:30 p.m. Jim Pliett is facilitating the ATV setup at the hospital, and volunteers are welcome. Video tapes of the behind-the-scenes activities at both Santa's workshop and the hospital are planned, and these will be used in a presentation that the club will be making at the Dayton Hamfest '98.
7. The question of the FWRC's sponsoring a "Christmas Family" was discussed and put to a vote. The club members present voted in the affirmative, so the club will proceed with adopting a needy family during the Christmas season. Cliff Shreve will pursue this initiative.
8. Bill Stockslager noted that a Club Handbook Committee had met November 18 and had worked on revisions to the Club's handbook. As a result, the revised handbook is expected to be available to Club members early next year.
9. Bill also noted that Becky Stockslager had produced a Club Flyer that was handed out at the club table during the ACARTS hamfest. Thanks to Becky for this outstanding effort.
10. Bill noted that an inventory of Club property will soon start. The intent is to inventory all of the Club's repeater assets, it's Field Day assets, and other miscellaneous assets.
11. Carl Rittenhouse conducted the 50-50 Club activities. A total of \$24.00 was collected. Al Burke, WB9SSE was the winner, and he donated his half of the pot (\$12.00) to the Club.
12. Following the business meeting, Scott Price, N9VZT gave a presentation of the recent upgrade of the 146.94 Repeater.

Respectfully submitted,

Al Burke, WB9SSE



## A TRUE CHRISTMAS STORY

Cliff Shreve N9MKB

I've always enjoyed playing Santa, possibly because of my Grandfather who played Santa years ago at the old Grand Leader department store here in Ft Wayne. I remember looking at some pictures I had found inside of an old mashed shoebox while my Mom and Dad were digging out the Christmas decorations. I decided back then that playing Santa is what I wanted to do. I spent three years at Southtown Mall, four years at Glenbrook, and many times going to private homes and company parties. Most always the visits were festive and full of Christmas cheer, but not always. This is a true Christmas Story...

It was Christmas Eve 1975; the evening was running late. I already had been to two large company parties and a dozen homes at which I carried in the presents, lead the group with Christmas songs, and poked fun at those who had too much Christmas cheer. I held the babies, and always had Grandma and Grandpa sitting on my lap. I could see that many times it might have been there last Christmas. The homes which I had just left were beautifully decorated, complete with a glowing fire in the fireplace. Lots of the women were dressed in evening gowns; the men were dressed in tuxes. The party really got going; soon the people there didn't want me to leave.

I looked at my watch and noticed on my Santa schedule that I had one more stop to make, it was in a much poorer area of the county, an area just west of New Haven IN. The notes on my schedule pad indicated that the toys I was to deliver would be found in the back of a 1959 Cadillac sitting on top of cinder blocks behind the residence. It was snowing so hard that evening that I was beginning to wonder if I was going to complete my runs. I looked at the time, it's 2:00 A.M. Christmas morning. I hope these people are still up. We cruised thru the area looking for the residence that had the old Cadillac as described.

I knew ahead of time that there were two special girls at this next stop for me to visit. One named Wendy, and the other named Stormy. It was noted on my pad that there was also a little dog there named Sparky. Within a few minutes we finally spotted the old Cadillac just as described, sitting on cinder blocks. The car was all covered with snow. I walked over and brushed off the rear window and looked inside. There in the back seat lay two pillowcases. Inside each pillowcase were a broomstick horse and a tee shirt from Kings Dept. store. I removed the two pillowcases and put them in the large Santa sack I was carrying.

I walked up on the front porch of the gray painted house and began ringing my sleigh bells and shouting Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas! I noticed there were no lights on in the house. Once again I pounded on the door. Finally a light came on in the doorway; an old man answered the door and said, "Well hello Santa." I said to him, "Is this where Wendy and Stormy live?" No, said the old gentleman, they live behind me in the



little house, in the rear. He said, "Be careful of them porch steps, they're mighty slippery."

I thanked the old man and proceeded to follow the narrow sidewalk around the house. Behind the house sat a smaller structure. It appeared to be an old chicken coop. You could see light around the cracks in the front door. Pieces of plastic had been put over the windows to keep out the cold and the snow. I thought to myself, certainly know one could live here.

I waved back at my mother who was waiting for me in the car, and then pounded loudly on the door yelling, "Merry Christmas, Merry Christmas!" The door came open, and there stood a young man on crutches. I noticed the fellow only had one leg, and was having a difficult time standin in the doorway. He hobbled back and said, "Come on in Santa." I had to lean forward for my head to clear the low door casing. The smell of fuel oil was strong; it appeared that they were heating the building with an old oil stove. Inside the one room was a table with three chairs, one bed, a small T.V. and an old couch. I could see what the people had been eating for dinner, it was still on the table - cut-up hot dogs with beans. At

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the kitchen table sat a young woman wearing a man's coat. Over on the bed sat a little girl about five years old. Beside her, covered up with a blanket was another small child. I could see that the situation here was not good. Just after leaving homes earlier where food and gifts were plentiful to this situation was shocking to say the least. I went over and sat on the edge of the bed to talk to the two small girls. A little dog came barking out at me. I said to the little girl sitting on the edge of the bed.

"And, what's your name?" "Wendy," she replied. "What's your little doggies name?" "His name is Sparky." The small girl lying beside me was silent. I asked her what her name was. She seemed not to be able to answer. Her sister then spoke up and said, "Santa, Stormy is real sick." I leaned over to give the small child a hug. As I did I heard her whisper something to me. I said, "Stormy, is there something you want to tell Santa?" Her little sister then poked me in the side and said, "Santa, Stormy thinks your Jesus." I said to Wendy, "Why would your sister think I'm Jesus?" "You know Wendy, that is what Christmas is all about, but I'm just Santa Claus, I go around at Christmas time spreading Christmas cheer". The little girl whispered to me, "Santa, my mom told Stormy that Jesus might come and get her today".

I had the biggest lump in my throat that I could ever have. I couldn't sing Jingle Bells, I couldn't ask the little girls to name the reindeers, all I could do was give them hugs, lots of them. My eyes were filled with

tears. I knew I had to get going, I knew also that I didn't want to accept anything for this Santa visit.

Every time that I went to a house to play Santa I would always ask the parents of the children there to please put the ten dollars in which they paid me into an envelope. This way the children don't see the exchange of money. As I was leaving the man hobbled over and handed me an envelope, which held the Santa money. I thanked him wishing him a Merry Christmas and shook his hand. I then thanked his wife and told them, "Please, you folks keep the envelope, your family has made Santa's Christmas the best one ever".

I proceeded out the front door ringing the sleigh bells. My mother was waiting outside in the car. It was still snowing heavily. The little dog was barking at my feet. I noticed that my mother was pointing back. Signaling me to turn around. As I did I noticed that the door was standing open on the little house and the gentleman had followed me outside into the snow. I noticed that he had thrown the card with the Santa money into the snow. I walked over and picked it up. The crippled man had tears running down his face. I said to him, "I hope I didn't hurt your feelings". He replied, "Santa, if you don't take this money, I'll never have you back." He said, "I can't afford to buy my kids much, but it means more to me to have you see my girls than anything I could buy them." So there we both stood, two grown men standing outside in the snow hugging each other. I could see the snow falling through the headlights of the car.

What a night it had been. It was now Christmas Day and time for me to go home and spend Christmas with my own family. Two weeks passed when I noticed in the Ft. Wayne newspaper that 5yr. old Stormy Nicum died of childhood Leukemia. I'll never forget little Wendy and Stormy. I don't know why the situation with the family was the way it was. I don't know if they were too proud to ask for help. However there is one thing I do know. This experience has made me very thankful each Christmas for my family and the many things in which I have.



**\*\*Special Thanks\*\***

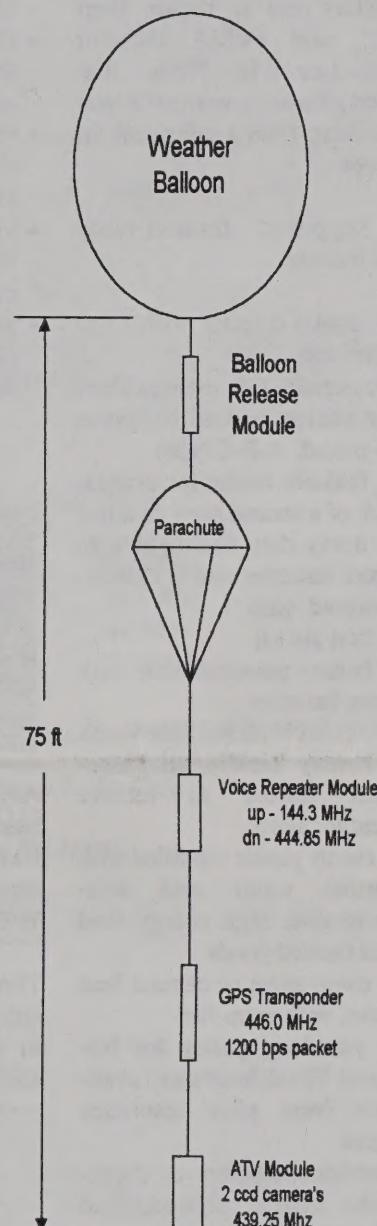
I would like to give special thanks this Christmas to Jim and John Coleman, their Mother and the entire Coleman family for donating to me a beautiful new Santa Suit, which was worn by their late father. I can guarantee you it will be put to good use. I wish everyone a Very Merry Christmas and prosperous New Year.

73' Cliff

## WindTrax Balloon Launch Set for Next August

WindTrax (www.windtrax.org) is a volunteer group out of central Indiana who help middle and high school kids learn about space, aeronautics, and amateur radio with some real hands-on experience. There have been 15 WindTrax launches in the last few years, which involve sending a weather balloon carrying several electronic boxes up about 120,000 feet, and then back to earth on a parachute. There are at least 5 more launches scheduled for various times in 1998.

One of those launches will be right here in Allen County on August 15th. The usual approach is that a school decides they would like to get involved, they find a corporate sponsor to both finance some of the cost of the weather balloon itself and other various supplies needed, and to lend some experienced helping hands from their employee pool, and the WindTrax people provide some of the expertise and usually the communications boxes that become part of the launch vehicle. It becomes a great learning experience for the kids, and a lot of fun for the helping hands! The Allen County launch will be somewhat unique in how it will be run. The "school" in this case is actually an Explorer Scout troop consisting of approximately 8 9th and 10th grade boys from various local high schools. The corporate sponsor for the troop and the WindTrax launch project is ITT Aerospace/Communication Division here in Fort Wayne, and instead of simply getting



the three communications boxes from the WindTrax people, they are going to assemble one of the boxes themselves. They have chosen the 2M to 70CM voice crossband repeater. It will consist of a receiver, a transmitter, a control

module and a battery power supply. Engineers from ITT will assist in the balloon launch planning and calculations, and some local hams will be needed to help the boys in understanding the basics of the repeater, and in assembling the box.

As launch time draws near, other hams will be needed to help set up a ground station to be used during the roughly 6 hour flight. We will need an ATV ground station for viewing the two on-board camera's (one B&W looking at the balloon and one color looking out to the horizon), a 70CM telemetry receiving station to receive location, altitude and temperature, and tie into APRS to display its location and progress, a 75M HF station to keep in contact with the chase team, and a general ground control station to operate through the cross band repeater and facilitate contacts. This will likely involve people from all local ham clubs and organizations to bring this effort to a successful finish.

The scouts are meeting every other Monday evening at the ITT facility at Cook and Lima roads in north Fort Wayne, but the hams will not have to be there for every meeting. If you are interested in participating in this fascinating project, please contact Don Gagnon, WB8HQS, at 451-6649 during the day to discuss participation. This is a golden opportunity to show ham radio to some youngsters and be involved in a fun and exciting project!

73, Don Gagnon WB8HQS



**FEMA SAYS:  
GIVE THE GIFT OF  
DISASTER SAFETY  
THIS YEAR**

WASHINGTON December 1, 1997 - The holidays are coming and it's time to draw up gift lists for loved ones. What do you give the person who has everything? How about safety? Even the person with everything probably doesn't have a family preparedness kit and important supplies necessary in case a disaster strikes in 1998. While not your traditional gifts, these items can make a huge difference in the year ahead - while also showing how much you care.

Officials at the Federal Emergency Management Agency remind holiday shoppers that every year, hundreds of thousands of Americans are forced to deal with natural disasters that wreck havoc with lives, families and communities. Thinking ahead and being prepared can do much to reduce or prevent the tremendous heartache and financial hardship of these disasters.

"While FEMA is not trying to replace Santa Claus, we are in the business of helping people be prepared.

The holidays are a great time to give an important, inexpensive gift that helps people prepare for disasters and to reduce their risk," said FEMA Director James Lee Witt. "These suggested gifts are a wonderful way of making 1998 a safer year for everyone."

Suggested disaster-ready gifts include:

- A smoke detector with extra batteries
- Household fire extinguishers for kitchen and all bedrooms (5 pound, A-B-C type)
- A foldable ladder for evacuation of a second story in a fire
- A heavy duty flashlight with extra batteries and a battery-powered lamp
- A first aid kit
- A battery powered radio with extra batteries
- A NOAA Weather Radio with a battery backup and tone-alert feature to receive weather alerts
- A sturdy plastic tub filled with bottled water and non-perishable, high energy food and canned goods
- A camp stove or canned heat stove, with extra fuel
- A year-long policy for National Flood Insurance, available from your insurance agent
- Hurricane shutters or cut-to-order marine plywood and heavy nails
- A winter car kit that includes emergency flares, shovel, windshield scraper, battery-powered radio, flashlight, water, snacks, tow chain or rope, tire chains and fluorescent distress flag
- If you live in a wildfire area, give the gift of a gardener to cut back combustible plants and vegetation from around the house.

**FEMA Information Available**

- 24 hours a day . . .
- on the World Wide Web: <http://www.fema.gov> AND
- FEMA is also co-sponsor of Storm97: <http://www.storm97.com>
- via fax-on-demand: phone in the U.S.A. (202) 646-FEMA (646-3362)
- via digital audio for broadcasters & print: contact [eipa@fema.gov](mailto:eipa@fema.gov)
- and listen to the FEMA Radio Network on the FEMA Website using RealAudio□



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Anyone who has a copy of a Heathkit Tunnel Dipper Model HM10A manual and will let copy please call Francis Barr W9ETT at 219-637-6479

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Three (3) Alinco 440 Handheld radios, model DJ460. New, still in boxes. \$150 each. Jim KB9NKL (219) 622-6608.

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**Editor's  
Note:**

This month's Hamsplatter may look a little different due to a "temporary" change in editor. Don't worry, Todd Hargis N9XRG will be back at the PC next month. 73, N2XUW

Membership Data: (Give this form to the treasurer at any FWRC meeting or mail to the address below)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Call \_\_\_\_\_ Class: N T G A AE

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: (\_\_\_\_\_) - \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone: (\_\_\_\_\_) - \_\_\_\_\_

Shall we list your address and phone number in the membership roster Y N?

Are you presently an ARRL member Y N?

Membership Term: (Jan - Dec) (Jul - Dec)

Family Membership:	<u>  </u> \$21.00yr	<u>  </u> \$10.50yr immediate family (list all callsigns)
Regular Membership:	<u>  </u> \$15.00yr	<u>  </u> \$7.50yr licensed member
Student Membership:	<u>  </u> \$6.00yr	<u>  </u> \$3.00yr full time student
Associate Membership:	<u>  </u> \$15.00yr	<u>  </u> \$7.50yr unlicensed member

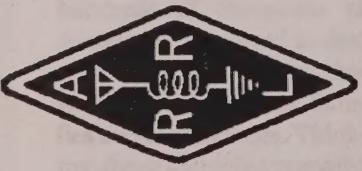
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To:

**SPLATTER**



November 1997

The Fort Wayne Radio Club

W9TE

